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Decision-Making Styles of Academic Leaders as Shaped by Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how academic leaders' decision-making styles and emotional intelligence (EI) relate to one another. University Academic deans, Head of departments, professors, associate professors and assistant professors make up the study's sample. Academic administrators of University in India were selected for data collection. Data was collected using questionnaires, among respondents to elicit their responses on the research problem. However, the researcher was successful to elicit responses from 497 employees. And only 490 were found useful for data analysis. The data was analysed through SPSS version 23. Tools such as mean scores; standard deviation, correlation, *t*-test, f-test, etc. were used to draw meaningful conclusions from the data. The result indicated that EI has significant impact of the decision-making style of academic leaders. Moreover, present research findings conclude that people having higher level of EI follow intuitive decision making and people with lower level of EI follow rational decision-making style. Emotional self-control is found out to be the major antecedent of EI. Additionally, neither a gender-based nor a job experience-based difference in the respondents' EI quotients or decision-making styles was discovered.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Decision-Making Styles, Leadership Skills, Abilities, Competencies etc.

Introduction

With today's organisations coping with complicated or changing internal and external settings, top-level employees must have a diverse set of skills and competences in order to make sound decisions and manage severe situations. Nowadays, cutthroat competition necessitates dynamic and developing organisations. Leaders who act intellectually and wisely must make pertinent, timely judgements that result in success (Sarkhosh, 2014). Higher education is one of the most vital areas for national growth, as well as one of the most economically invested in. Academic leaders, like other leaders, are struggling to manage in these changing times. Leaders' qualities and competencies to identify the correct objectives and choose the best feasible alternative to achieve them are critical to any organisation's success. Leaders interact with a wide range of people with varying skill levels on a regular basis, and they must continue to improve their awareness of employee needs and skills in order to respond correctly. Leaders make these judgements in either a certainty or uncertainty context; in the event of ambiguity, they make hazardous decisions as a result of working under stressful situations. Here comes emotional intelligence (EI), which is regarded as one of the most important talents for a leader to succeed in today's uncertain and ever-changing workplace (Sarkhosh, 2014). EI is characterised as the capacity to govern one's own and others' emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1995).

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One of the most difficult tasks for any leader is decision-making. The quality of decisions has a big impact on how well an organisation performs. Making decisions is one of the most important functions of a leader in any organisation. Leaders' judgements have a tremendous impact on organisational efficiency and well-being in these conditions (Dumitriu et al., 2014). Decision-making that is original and creative is constantly demanded and valued. Leaders in the public and private sectors may have different decision-making styles, but their work contexts demand them to be adaptive to various decision-making approaches dependent on circumstances and situations (Sahidur Rahman et al., 2016). Organisational leaders' decision-making styles are influenced by a variety of elements, including their EI abilities. According to research (Yildizbas, 2017), a high level of EI is associated with improved decision-making among leaders. Because "emotional common sense is crucial for adjusting to and dealing with people who bring a variety of differences to the work setting," EI will assist all leaders in managing tough circumstances and moving smoothly through transitions and crises (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012). Academic leaders also want to assess their cutting-edge capabilities while also advancing in more inventive ways. As a corollary, this study investigates the significance of EI in defining academic leaders' decision-making approaches.

Literature Review

Over the last two decades, academics have given EI a lot of attention (Meisler, 2014). The origins of EI can be found in Thorndike's (1920) publications, which are based on studies of social intelligence conducted at the time. Thorndike described social intelligence as the ability to recognise and respect people in human connections, as well as to be intelligent in such relationships. Salovey and Mayer defined EI as "a set of skills relevant to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotions in one's own self and others, the effective regulation of emotions in one's own self and others, and the use of emotions to motivate, plan, and achieve personal objectives" in 1990. Goleman popularised the term "emotional intelligence." Goleman's (1995; 1998) work on EI happens to be extremely important in developing hypotheses about the subject. EI talents, according to Goleman's (1998) research, are multiple times more essential than specialised and intellectual ability, and have a better possibility of reaching greatness. The relevance of the relationship between leadership and EI has been written about by George (2000), Goleman (2000, 2003), Holian (2006) and Boyatzis et al. (2013). These studies have conclusively demonstrated that EI is required for leadership and, in fact, a sine qua non. Goleman (2003) defines the primary traits of an emotionally intelligent leader as self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and empathy, all of which will be examined in this study. According to Goleman, EI is an important part of leadership style and decision-making efficacy (2000). Decision-making is an important element of everyday interactions; It is a person's learned habitual reaction pattern when presented with a decision situation. It is a habit-based proclivity to behave in a particular way in a specific choice scenario, rather than a personality trait (Scott & Bruce, 1995). Under uncertain conditions, decision-making is the active selection of two or more choices in a constructive manner to reach a specified goal, purpose or result with the least degree of risk (Kashaninia et al., 2015). Leaders usually see decision-making as their most difficult task, so they must continually pick what to do, how to do it, where to do it, and sometimes even how to do it. The harmonisation of ideas and feelings, which is especially crucial in decision-making, is the focus of EI frameworks (Wu et al., 2014). Scott and Bruce (1995) identified five primary decision-making styles (dependent, avoidant, spontaneous, rational, and intuitive).

An examination of studies conducted around the world reveals that emotions and EI, particularly in leadership and management decision-making types, play a critical role in organisational performance (Ahmadi & Hendijani, 2018). Recent researchers have found a statistically significant link between decision-making styles and EI (Ibarahim & Elsababhy, 2020; Ottman et al., 2020). The results also point to an advantageous effect of EI on intuitive decision-making and a detrimental effect on avoidant and dependent decision-making. In addition, females have stronger EI than males, according to all of the data. In a group of corporate managers and supervisors, EI has a significant positive effect on the rational and intuitive decision-making styles and a negative effect on the dependent and spontaneous decision-making styles. However, there is no significant relationship between locus of control and decision-making styles, according

to Ahmadi and Hendijani (2018). Similar results were obtained by Grubb et al. (2018) and Bhardwaj (2017), who discovered a strong and favourable correlation between EI and the research subjects' rational, intuitive, reliant and avoidant decision-making styles. While there was a significant and unfavourable correlation between EI and respondents' spontaneous decision-making styles, (Dua, 2016) examined how leadership and decision-making styles related using EI as a moderating factor. According to the findings of a study done by Nowrozi (2015), EI is crucial for sports managers, especially when making experience-based decisions. Dolcos (2018) asserts that older adults have stronger EI because they can better manage their emotions. According to Mohamed and Yousef (2014), there is a bad correlation between academic success and EI. Age, years of experience and EI were all related. Women were once again shown to possess greater EI than men. The same conclusions were drawn from research carried out in Iran by Hamidi (2012), who found a strong correlation between EI and decision-making style in their investigation. The link between leadership, decision-making techniques and EI has been researched and demonstrated in a number of industries, including the oil industry by Moghadam et al. (2011), the health sector by Mohamed and Ahamed (2019), the corporate sector by Ahmadi and Hendijani, the public sector by Bhardwaj, the police sector by Grubb et al. (2018), and even the education sector by Ottman et al., 2020; Soltwisch, 2016. However, no specific research has been conducted on academic leaders. This study aims to fill a research vacuum by investigating how EI affects the decision-making processes of academic leaders. Academic leaders have major challenges at various universities, which must be taken into consideration when passing judgement.

A scant number of research have been done on how EI affects academic leaders' decisions at universities, according to the literature. Given this context, this subject was picked for research. To close the aforementioned gap, the present investigation will be conducted. The following objectives of the study are explicitly intended to be met:

Objectives

- To investigate the EI of academic leaders,
- To study the decision-making styles of academic leaders,
- To examine the relationship between EI and decision-making styles &
- To study the impact of gender on EI and decision-making in academic leaders.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are established in order to accomplish the aforementioned objectives:

H1: The academic leaders are not emotionally intelligent.

H2: The components of decision-making styles are not effective.

H3: There is no significant correlation between EI and decision-making styles.

H4: There is no significant difference in EI and components of decision-making styles in males and females.

Research Methodology

The research is purely descriptive. The goal of descriptive research is to describe the features of a certain person or group. This research comprises a variety of questionnaires and fact-finding inquiries. This research entails gathering information from academic leaders in Indian universities. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, which was then analysed with the proper tools and methodologies. Academic Deans, Head of departments, professors, associate professors and assistant professors were the sample respondents. The information was gathered from Academic Deans, HOD's and Professors at Indian universities. Top 10 NIRF ranking universities of India where selected, including Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Jadavpur University Kolkata, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore**,** Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, Manipal Academy of Higher Education-Manipal, Calcutta University, Kolkata Vellore Institute of Technology and University of Hyderabad. The researcher first emailed the participants in June, 2022. During the first week of data collection, the researcher received almost 188 responses. On which researcher conducted pilot study. Cronbach alpha was found to be .85. A follow-up email was distributed on July, 2022. The initial follow-up email returned a total of 120 responses.

The researcher sent a secondary follow-up email after 12 days, which resulted in 78 more responses. Again, after two weeks follow-up email was sent in a final effort to obtain more responses. The researcher received another 97 returned surveys after this final attempt, resulting in a total of 497 returned responses. Only 490 of these were thought to be beneficial for data analysis. To guarantee the sample's representativeness, the data were collected using a convenient sampling technique. Version 23 of SPSS was used to analyse the data. To make sense of the data, techniques including mean scores, standard deviation, correlation, *t*-test, correlation, etc. were utilised.

Questionnaire and Variables

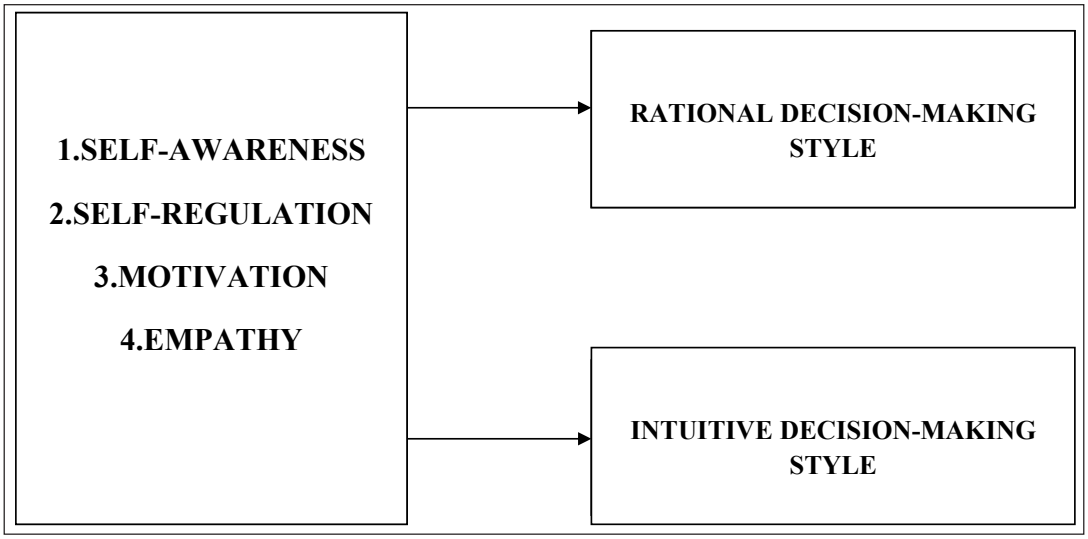
A questionnaire designed by Shailendra Singh in 2004 was used to assess EI. Rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant and spontaneous decision-making styles were all evaluated using the general decision-making styles questionnaire (Scott & Bruce, 1995), which has five subscales. The only parts of decision-making that were examined in this study, however, were logical and intuitive.

Models Used in the Study

This study used a mixed model of EI. According to the concept developed by Daniel Goleman in 1998, EI is a broad category of abilities and competences that influence leadership success. The five essential components of EI are outlined in Goleman's model: 1. Self-awareness is the capacity to be aware of one's feelings, strengths and shortcomings, to drive ideals and objectives and to be aware of how they affect others, while also employing intuition to inform judgements. 2. Self-regulation entails restraining or redirecting one's irrational feelings and impulses and adjusting to the environment as it changes. 3. Social skill—managing relationships to influence others in the correct direction. 4. Empathy—especially while making decisions, consider the sentiments of others. 5. Motivation—the desire to succeed just for its own sake of achievement. The study employed the mixed model of decision-making proposed by Scott and Bruce (1995). This paradigm divides decision-making approaches into five categories: 1. Rational—You often follow a methodical and logical process while making judgements. 2. Avoidant—You frequently put off making significant decisions until you are under duress. 3. Dependent—You frequently seek the advice of others while making major decisions. 4. Intuitive—You frequently rely on instinct while making decisions. 5. Spontaneous—You often act rashly when making decisions.

Based on above mentioned models research developed below given theoretical model for the present study.

Theoritical Model of the Study



Source: Developed by researcher.

Fig. 1

Analysis and Interpretation

Frequency Analysis

Frequency analysis allows the researcher to understand the demographics of the sample organisation. Percentages and counts are used in the tabular form. The following section presents the data with corresponding charts to understand the data entirely.

Table 1: Gender

Gender	*Frequency*	*Per cent*	*Valid Per cent*	*Cumulative Per cent*
Male	420	85.7	85.7	85.7
Female	70	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	490	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows 85% of respondents were males and remaining 14.3% were females. The study recorded a higher response rate from males than female. The data in Table 1 is presented in graph 1.

Descriptive Analysis

The researcher can comprehend the behaviour of the constructs under examination through descriptive analysis. The mean scores and standard deviation are typically used to infer this behaviour. The analysis of all the research constructs is shown in Table 2. Emotional self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and empathy were used to gauge EI, as was mentioned elsewhere in this study. On the other hand, both logical and intuitive decision-making were used to gauge decision-making.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of All Factors

Dimensions	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
Self-Awareness	490	3.5442	.88896
Self-Regulation	490	3.7347	.65624
Motivation	490	3.7619	.66667
Empathy	490	3.6822	.49681
Rational	490	3.6490	.67643
Intuitive	490	3.6122	.80458
Valid N (list wise)	490		

According to the table, respondents believed that self-regulation and emotional self-awareness were the next two important antecedents of their EI after emotional self-regulation 3.7619 is the average score for emotional self-control (SD.66667). The average score for emotional self-awareness is 3.5443, while the average score for emotional self-regulation is 3.7347 (SD.65624). Motivation secures for 3.7619. Empathy's average rating is 3.6822. (SD.49681). Respondents use a more rational decision-making style than an intuitive one when making decisions (mean score=3.6490, SD.67643) (mean score 3.6122, SD .80458).

Independent Sample *t*-Test on Gender

The study attempted to determine whether there are any appreciable variations between males and girls in the mean scores of all the constructs after reporting the mean scores for each construct.

The results of the test are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3: Independent Sample *t*-Test Based on Gender

	Gender	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error Mean*	*T-Value*	*P-Value*
Self-Awareness	Male	420	3.5952	.87586	.13515	.909	.391
	Female	70	3.2381	.97590	.36886		
Self-regulation	Male	420	3.7190	.62790	.09689	-.323	.756
	Female	70	3.8286	.85968	.32493		
Motivation	Male	420	3.8175	.65932	.10174	1.446	.186
	Female	70	3.4286	.65868	.24896		
Empathy	Male	420	3.6531	.50596	.07807	1.135	.286
	Female	70	3.8571	.42857	.16198		
Rational Decision	Male	420	3.6571	.63135	.09742	.151	.884
	Female	70	3.6000	.96609	.36515		
Intuitive Decision	Male	420	3.6857	.76144	.11749	1.329	.224
	Female	70	3.1714	.97590	.36886		

Note: Test has been conducted at 5 per cent significance level.

Table 3 demonstrates that, at a 5% significance level, there is no gender difference in any of the variables. The t-values are all less than the cutoff value. Similarly, all of the constructions' p-value cutoffs are lower than 0.05. It implies that the notions are about equally perceived by men and women, and any discrepancies in mean scores are just coincidental. So, we concur with null hypothesis H5.

Correlation Analysis

EI is an independent variable, but decision-making style are dependent variables in this study since one of the main goals was to explore the relationship between EI and decision-making styles, as it was previously mentioned. In order to assess the importance of the association, Pearson correlation was done between the independent and dependent variables. Table 4 presents the outcomes.

Table 4: Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making Styles

		IDMS	*RDMS*	*SA*	*SR*	*MOV*	*EMP*
Intuitive Decision-making style (IDMS)	PC						
	P						
	N						
Rational Decision-making style (RDMS)	PC	-.663**					
	P	.000					
	N	490					
Self-awareness (SA)	PC	.484**	-.438**				
	P	.000	.002				
	N	490	490				
Self-regulation(SR)	PC	.472**	-.496**	.434**			
	P	.001	.000	.002			
	N	490	490	490			
Motivation (MOV)	PC	-.264*	.023*	.247	.294*		
	P	.066	.876	.088	.040		
	N	490	490	490	490		
Empathy (EMP)	PC	.230	-.188	.310*	.485**	.234	
	P	.111	.195	.030	.000	.106	
	N	490	490	490	490	490	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the table,

- Both decision-making styles and emotional self-awareness are significantly correlated, but the intuitive decision-making style and emotional self-awareness are significantly positively correlated (R =.484, N = 490, and P =.000), whereas the rational decision-making style and emotional self-awareness are significantly negatively correlated (R =.438, N = 490, and P =.002).

  The reason there is a positive significant relationship between emotional self-awareness and intuitive decision-making styles is that the more emotionally aware a person is, the clearer his goals for making a decision will be. In this process, he may try to trust his instincts and intuition over facts and figures. The conclusion drawn from the study above is that while adopting intuitive decision-making styles rather than rational decision-making styles, a person is emotionally self-aware.

- The second component of EI, self-regulation, is connected to both modes of decision-making. R =.472, N = 490, and P =.001 show a strong positive association between emotional self-regulation and intuitive decision-making style. However, R =.496, N = 490, and P =.000 show a strong negative relationship between emotional self-control and rational decision-making style. Self-control has a positive, significant relationship with intuitive

decision-making because it puts a person in a better position to make the right choice while taking into account all the aspects that will impact his final goal. As a result, it promotes an intuitive decision-making approach since the decision-maker considers more than just the facts and data.

- Again, both of the decision-making aspects are associated to the third dimension of EI, empathy. However, there is a conflict between empathy and intuitive decision-making R =-.264, N = 490, and P =.066, whereas R =.023, N = 490, and P =.876 show a strong positive relationship empathy between and rational decision-making.

A person with emotional self-regulation will not allow their instincts to influence their conclusions, which is why emotional self-regulation is positively correlated with making logical judgements. He would weigh the pros and cons and make an informed choice. As a result, the emotional self-regulation component has a negative relationship with intuitive decision-making. Empathy, the fourth dimension of EI, is linked to both types of decision-making, but there is no meaningful connection between them. It is clear that empathy has a substantial positive link with correct self-awareness and emotional self-assessment, both of which are measured by R =.485, N = 490, and P =.000.

Table 5: Acceptance/Rejection of Null Hypothesis

Sr. No.	*Hypothesis*	*Decision*	*Reason*
H1	The academic leaders are not emotionally intelligent.	Rejected	Mean score greater than mid-point
H2	The components of decision-making styles are not effective.	Rejected	Mean score is high
H3	There is no significant correlation between Emotional intelligence and decision-making styles.	Partially accepted	Empathy doesn't show significant correlation with decision making styles.
H4	There is no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence and components of decision-making styles in males and females.	Accepted	P value > 0.05

Source: Table prepared by author.

Discussions

The literature review earlier in the chapter, which focused on the links between EI and decision-making styles, identified promising innovations in the field of research and intervention. A review of available literature infers that a relationship exists between EI and decision-making styles of academic leaders. Data derived from the current investigation confirms the relationship between these two constructs. The models further look at the moderating role of EI in predicting the relationship among decision making styles and EI. The Daniel Goleman's model of EI was used in the research to measure level of EI in respondents. Only three dimensions out of the five dimensions were used in this study and one sub-dimension to measure EI. For decision making the model of Bruce and Scott was used. Only two dimensions of the models were taking in the present, that is, rational decision-making style and intuitive decision-making style, as they broadly classify the all decision-making styles.

This study set out to investigate how decision-making approaches and EI are related. The study found that EI has an impact on how academic leaders make decisions. The current research's findings also imply that those with higher degrees of EI make judgements intuitively rather than rationally. The present study's findings are in line with past research, which shown that EI affects decision-making approaches (Ibarahim & Elsababhy, 2020; Ottman et al., 2020; Yildizbas, 2017; Dua, 2016; Nowrouzi, 2015). Finally, the results of this study have persuaded academic leaders to give EI more consideration in their training programmes.

After gathering the necessary data from the various Indian universities, we can draw the conclusion that it is obvious that emotions must be properly managed in order to function in the right way for a leader to be effective for both his or her organisation and in his or her personal life, where it also helps to resolve problems in various scenarios. University administrators should provide academic deans, HODs, professors, associate professors and assistant professors with chances for training and development so they may hone their EI abilities, according to the findings from this sample on the influence of EI on academic leaders. These

recommendations are in line with suggestions from earlier research on academic deans (Fauzan et al., 2021; Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Morris & Laipple, 2015; Wepner et al., 2014; Wepner et al., 2015; Wolverton et al., 2001; Wolverton et al., 1999). Additionally, the statistics advise aspiring academic leaders to concentrate on honing their general EI abilities and raising their level of emotional awareness before applying for academic leadership positions. This study is a small step in the process of getting to know about the relationship between EI and decision-making styles. Further, in-depth studies must be done to unravel the relationship between the two variables and get meaningful results from the research. The current study has several limitations, but it is a crucial tool for comprehending the complex relationship between decision-making methods and EI among academic leaders. This research's internal validity is weaker than those of experimental studies since it is descriptive cross-sectional. The present study also included self-reported measures in which participants self-reported their EI and decision-making preferences. Although all of the scales used are designed to be self-administered, there is a possibility of common method variance. Cross-ratings may thus be used in future research to lessen this variation. Additionally, we have only associated two decision-making styles; there are many others that may be researched in order to have a deeper knowledge of the variables.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The prior chapter's literature analysis, which focused on the relationships between EI and decision-making styles, found promising improvements in study and intervention. The goal of this research was to look at the connection between EI and decision-making. A study discovered that EI influences academic administrators' decision-making approaches. According to the research findings, those with greater levels of EI make intuitive decisions, whereas people with lower levels of EI make reasoned decisions. The current study builds on earlier research results that EI influences decision-making styles. The current findings validate a previously recognised link between decision-making styles and EI, as well as characterise the influence of EI on this relationship. Furthermore, the outcomes of the current study revealed that academic administrators should prioritise EI in their training programmes. In addition, as the academic dean population ages, university administrators should focus on developing faculty who may be able to fill academic dean positions in the future based on their ability to recognise their own and others' emotions, use emotions in problem solving and decision-making and control their own emotions.

Finally, after obtaining the essential data from Indian universities, we can infer those emotions must be appropriately handled in order for a leader to be effective both in his or her companies and in their personal life. It also assists in the classification of solutions in a variety of scenarios.

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